

NEW TRENDS IN FRENCH URBAN POLICIES

This essay contains a lecture which the author delivered at Boston University on April 7, 1984; for the first conference of the International Planning Division of the New England American Planning Association.

The essay summarizes the new policy options implemented in the context of decentralization. It emphasizes the new kind of power structure, the clarification of responsibilities between the state, the planning administration and the local governments. However, the first acts passed seem to indicate that withdrawal of the central authorities is far from complete.

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INTRODUCTION

After the victory of the left party in May, 1981, one of the first issues to be opened up by the new government was that of decentralization. Presented as the "Great Affair", the reform witnessed the belief of the new government in structural reform as an instrument of social and political change.

It, therefore, is one of the reasons why I decided to discuss it before you, and to focus more closely my attention on its relationship to city planning and urban development. After recalling a few data and the administrative context, we will see the details of the architecture of this reform movement, launched 2 years ago, and which has a fundamental influence on urban policies. It will demonstrate the break implied by the options of the new authorities, which in turn explains why the reform undertaken is being given such high overall priority and why it is an essentially political matter.

I - The French Context

Before coming to the structural reforms, it seems necessary to give you some data to be taken into account, the actors involved in planning, and the tools available.

I.1. General Trends

- o Out of the total surface area in France (137.5 millions of acres), towns only occupy 3%, industry 0.4%, transportation and infrastructures 2%, agricultural land 60%, forests 27%.

The annual consumption of land for urban purposes is less than 250.00 acres (less than half of which is for housing).

- o Concerning demography, the last census shows a very slow growth of the population. This growth is very unevenly distributed between the different regions. Generally speaking, demographic growth has continued to move from big urban areas to smaller areas and to rural regions. Inside these urban areas, we notice an extension of suburban zones. The former suburbs follow the evolution of the inner city areas with a fall or a stagnation in their population. On the other side, a demographic explosion is confirmed in rural areas, located on the peripheries of suburbs. During the past 10 years, there was a geographical urban sprawl, corresponding probably to a new distribution of space (in respect of different social classes, and of different classes of age).
- o The data relating to housing confirm this dispersal of urban development; there is a fall in the number of housing units built per year - in 1975, 500.000 compared to 350.000 in 1982 - with two opposite movements: the number of collective units fell sharply on one hand, and on the other hand, the number of individual ones increased until 1980, before starting to fall off.

I.2. The Actors

After this brief survey, let us see the institutional framework in which it is produced.

Despite rapid urbanization and high rates of population and economic development this century, the structure of local government administration in France has remained the same since more than one hundred years.

At the lowest level, the administrative unit is the commune (36.400), at the intermediate level, there are 96 Departements, at the upper level, 22 regions. Two main factors have to be taken into account:

- the centralization of the power and of the administration.
- the extreme extent of the mosaic of communes. These factors are historical, and have no equivalent in any other European countries.

o The State's Role

Planning is a function of the State - with the exception of the 25 planning agencies set up in the big towns, and 9 associated with new towns - and is administered at the level of the Departement. Among these agencies, the most important for the administration are the 96 "Directions Departementales de L'Equipement" (D.D.E.) located in each departement. Their role is to produce local plans for the communes of their departement which are not serviced by their own Planning Agency. The D.D.E. has a very important coordinating and supervisory role in plan production. It is a decentralized field service of the Ministry of Town planning and its role reflects the functions of the Ministry: plan-making, development control, transport planning, public housing construction...

After the 2nd World War, the State has been the main driving force for the big development programs of the Reconstruction. The necessary legal and financial tools were created by the State and this allowed them to set up a wide network of infrastructure amenities and equipment in the metropolitan areas.

During the sixties, the State undertook directly other operations in clearly defined geographical places: for example, the new towns, or the major development planning along the coast. Relying on instruments specifically created for the purpose (mainly public development bodies) the State was the leader in the development of these urban poles, frequently against the local authorities concerned, or without them.

It is in the same period that the State started to withdraw from the initiative and financing of other big development operations, leaving their responsibilities to the communes. This was especially true in the seventies, when urban renewal was progressively transferred to the responsibility of the local authority alone.

o The Local Authorities

These communes, whose financial and technical responsibilities have thus increased, are extremely numerous in most of the built up areas. In the context of such a mosaic, the need for communal groupings was most evident in dealing with urban problems and consequently, in the administration of planning. Indeed, there was creation of joint bodies for operating urban public services, but such a cooperation was usually effective around sectorial policies.

What is their role, prior to the reform? They are responsible for making available a large number of local services, building and managing many of them, and they play a very important role in their financing.

Their ability to follow autonomous policies is questionable since they are bound by a tight network of national laws, regulations, instructions and controls. Their budget has to be approved by the Central State Representative, the Prefect (1); the basis of local taxation is fixed by the State.

Many of their investments are dependent on central subsidies which are allocated according to national planning regulations and loans from the specialized public financial institutions are also controlled.

National regulations which define the status of local civil servants often prevent the local authority from developing their own technical expertise, so maintaining a dependence on central state services and their local branches.

I.3. The Tools Available

The Planning and Land Act of 1967 provides for 2 levels of planning: firstly, a master plan which indicates the strategic land use zonings and road proposals; secondly, a local plan (land use plan) which gives detailed guidelines for development applications at the local level, consistent with the broad intentions of the master plan. The Land Planning Act attempted to bring together for the first time politicians and planners to the spatial problems of rapid urbanization.

Despite that fact, the failure is obvious: their elaboration means very long term efforts, they display no flexibility of content, there are sets of rigid regulations about development; furthermore, the classification of land, through the land use plan, implies no counterpart (financial or fiscal) for the private owner. The public participation is not required; in the case of the land use plan, there is a public inquiry, but it is simply a procedure.

Let us say that, during the same period, the land intervention tools available to local authorities have improved substantially: they have witnessed, above all, the development of the preemption rights of public authorities. (2)

As you can see, it is not at all clear whether local authorities can have any policy of their own, or whether they are simply a local tool within the central power machine.

II. The Set of Reforms

France has a reputation for being highly centralized. But over the last 10 years, all political parties have declared themselves in favor of decentralization and of developing local responsibilities.

As soon as elected in 1981, the new government introduced an important reform process which in many of its aspects concerns urban development and planning.

II.1. The 1st Act (March 1982)

This act, concerning the "Rights and liberties of Municipalities, departements and regions" gives new provisions for centre/periphery relations, puts an end to the state control over all local authorities, introducing several changes which at least appear to constitute serious breaks with the past:

- control over the acts of local authorities is abolished, with a-posteriori checks through the Courts replacing the a-priori administrative and political censorship.

- directly elected regional assemblies are to become fully political bodies with significantly extended powers, and executive power resides with the chairman of the regional council (convokes the assembly and determine its agenda), and at the level of the Departement, the executive power lies in the hands of the chairman of the Departement Council who becomes the head of all the Administrative services transferred from the state level.

- The Prefects cease to be the executives of the Departement and the Region, becoming mere commissioners of the Republic, responsible for the coordination of the state's field services;

- Local authorities can now take measures to ensure the protection of the economic and social interests of the regional population.

II.2. The Second Act (January 1983)

This act introduces a new repartition of competences between local authorities and the state. Essentially, the state clarifies its role in urban affairs, and in the distribution of planning responsibilities among the 3 levels of administration.

Three main principles lie in this transfer of competences:

- o it must not allow any authority to exercise any control over another one;
- o it only depends on existing local administrative structures;
- o if it implies new charges for the local authority, there is a corresponding transfer of resources.

The act focuses on urban planning and land use permits: in both cases, it is the commune that will inherit the responsibilities that are transferred. The mayors will be the decision-makers where city planning is concerned. (3)

The Departement assumes responsibility for rural development tasks and infrastructures.

The Region assists in the economic development, with a new impulse in regional planning.

The State retains responsibility for housing aids and the safeguard of patrimony and sites.

Let us come back a little while to the urban development. There is a balance between the local powers and the State prerogatives. Communes see their control over land recognized, that is to say most of the competences in urban development. They are responsible for elaborating and applying their local plans: (this puts an end to the principle of joint elaboration). The publication of the plan gives the mayor the responsibility for issuing planning and building permits in the commune. (If there is no plan, these permits will continue to be issued by the State and in its name).

Thus, the withdrawal of the central authorities is far from complete: they still have a wide range of graded intervention procedures that may enable them to impose their will. The land use plan, for example, must always conform to certain national planning regulations and directives. Furthermore, the Act introduces the concept of "intercommunal agreement between a group of local authorities and communes," intercommunal financial plans for medium and long term developments on transportation, housing, and public facilities. These will be produced by voluntary groupings of communes. If the communes fail to carry out these charts, the State will intervene and produce their own estimates.

At last, the Act provides for the financial arrangements necessary to ensure transfers of competences. An important financial reform, coming in 1985, will involve the transfer of state fiscal resources to the localities: thus the economy and budgetary power of the communes should be increased. (4)

II.3. The Economic and Social Plan

The coordination of the activities of the four territorial units of government (Central State, Region, Departement and Commune) will take place within the framework of the national plan.

Because urban policy is becoming more complex, involving the responsibilities of managing spatial growth and preventing urban decay, the need for coordinating is increasing. Through the economic and social plan, France is a good example of how planning assists coordination.

There are 2 aspects:

- 1) the pooling of information between representatives of central, regional, local governments, of the private sector and of the major trade-union organizations;
- 2) the attempt to produce coherent proposals for the medium term (5 years)

However, 2 weaknesses can be noticed:

- 1) the objectives in the plan are in the form of guidelines, rather than mandatory requirements.
- 2) the representatives of regional or local authorities are very few to participate in the preparation of the plan.

II.4. A Bill to Come - Operational Urban Procedure

I told you before, concerning the urban development, decentralization is, so far, only applicable to spatial planning and planning permits. A bill, on the operational urban procedures is on the way at the moment.

Its main stakes will be to set up adequate means for intervention on buildings, to simplify and consolidate preemption rights, to modify the

rules governing the property valuation basis, and to improve citizens' participation in local life: the idea of public discussion is becoming common now.

To prepare this bill, and because it is important that the planning tools at the disposal of decision makers should be well-suited to meet this objective, there was, one year ago, a large scale consultation carried out among those concerned with planning and development. Several points of agreements emerged: the scale on which city-planning problems should be treated, i.e. the neighborhood, the injustices resulting from land tenure inequalities, the need to adopt a more flexible attitude to the control of urban operations, the efforts to overcome functional and social segregation.

III. Conclusion

Fundamentally, the government wishes to transform local political life. If it is really fully implemented, the government's proposals will constitute the most radical local government changes in a century.

However, the administrative decentralization measures tend to be less radical than they appear at 1st view. One may wonder whether such a change will not be vulnerable in the event of a political and social crisis.

Political pressures have contributed to slow down the elections to the departemental assemblies, then the local elections underlined the fall to electoral support for the left: thus, some began to have doubts about administrative decentralization, that might strengthen the powers of the right wing.

In the most urbanized and industrialized regions or departements, the leaders of national stature could take advantage of the new rules of the game. The strengthening at local level could meet with resistance from the administration. This one is very powerful at the local level. Only a few big cities, departements or regions have sufficiently well staffed service, to counterbalance the State administration.

In any case, the 1st reforms adopted, despite appearances, reveal some options that are already clear:

- 1) The Departmeents have been favored, at the expense of the region, the reform of which is delayed until later.
- 2) Big cities with well staffed competent services have been favored - they are the only ones to be able to benefit from the increased autonomy.
- 3) The local representatives have been favored against the Prefects.

Let us say that other reforms are underway, which should achieve the whole process of decentralization:

- reform of the local semi-private companies, to make these instruments more efficient at the service of local authorities;
- reform of the organization of territorial civil service;
- reform of local finance;

It is obviously too soon to appreciate the results of these reforms, but it is certain that the quality of urban development in the years to come, will depend on their success or their failure.

FOOTNOTES

- (1) The most important of the State officials is the Prefect of the Departement - civil servant appointed by the Ministry of the Interior to administer all the state services located in the Departement, and in addition to exercise tutelage over the mayors of the Communes on his Departement. On this point, he checks on the legality of decisions by mayors and municipal councils. On local plans, he had administrative interventions.
- (2) Among them, an original institution has been created - the Regional land banks, public establishments with an industrial and commercial nature and a financial autonomy. Their only vocation is to be the public intermediaries in questions^{ON LAND}. They acquire land, which they manage, and either transfer, or retain in their patrimony. For the purpose of acquisition of land they possess the prerogatives of public power (with rights to preemption and expropriation).. However, they have no vocation to develop land. They have an elected Board of Directors, most of them from local authorities. They benefit from their own fiscal resource - the special equipment tax which is added to local taxes in communes of their intervention area. This tool has solved the problem of anticipation, regulating land markets and seizing essential land opportunities. But on the other side, each commune remains master of its own urban development, and that is not a necessary guarantee for a coherent urban development program.
- (3) The coming transfer of responsibilities should ensure a better kind of planning and this is for several reasons: local projects will be studied by people with local responsibilities, in consultation with the inhabitants, and decisions will be taken openly and will be judged by the electors. Moreover, the reform should oblige the central authorities to adapt themselves and to assist the local authorities.
- (4) The State credits corresponding to the competences transferred are grouped together in a general decentralization entitlement. Direct transfer of some facilities is also set up. In a parallel way, the State investment subsidies for local authorities are grouped together to form a global equipment entitlement, a sort of Block Grant, and redistributed, according to general rules, to all these localities, which have free use of them whereas up until now, subsidies were delivered sectorially.

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NEW TRENDS IN FRENCH URBAN POLICIES

This essay contains a lecture which the author delivered at Boston University on April 7, 1984; for the first conference of the International Planning Division of the New England American Planning Association.

The essay summarizes the new policy options implemented in the context of decentralization. It emphasizes the new kind of power structure, the clarification of responsibilities between the state, the planning administration and the local governments. However, the first acts passed seem to indicate that withdrawal of the central authorities is far from complete.

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INTRODUCTION

After the victory of the left party in May, 1981, one of the first issues to be opened up by the new government was that of decentralization. Presented as the "Great Affair", the reform witnessed the belief of the new government in structural reform as an instrument of social and political change.

It, therefore, is one of the reasons why I decided to discuss it before you, and to focus more closely my attention on its relationship to city planning and urban development. After recalling a few data and the administrative context, we will see the details of the architecture of this reform movement, launched 2 years ago, and which has a fundamental influence on urban policies. It will demonstrate the break implied by the options of the new authorities, which in turn explains why the reform undertaken is being given such high overall priority and why it is an essentially political matter.

I - The French Context

Before coming to the structural reforms, it seems necessary to give you some data to be taken into account, the actors involved in planning, and the tools available.

I.1. General Trends

- o Out of the total surface area in France (137.5 millions of acres), towns only occupy 3%, industry 0.4%, transportation and infrastructures 2%, agricultural land 60%, forests 27%.

The annual consumption of land for urban purposes is less than 250.00 acres (less than half of which is for housing).

- o Concerning demography, the last census shows a very slow growth of the population. This growth is very unevenly distributed between the different regions. Generally speaking, demographic growth has continued to move from big urban areas to smaller areas and to rural regions. Inside these urban areas, we notice an extension of suburban zones. The former suburbs follow the evolution of the inner city areas with a fall or a stagnation in their population. On the other side, a demographic explosion is confirmed in rural areas, located on the peripheries of suburbs. During the past 10 years, there was a geographical urban sprawl, corresponding probably to a new distribution of space (in respect of different social classes, and of different classes of age).
- o The data relating to housing confirm this dispersal of urban development; there is a fall in the number of housing units built per year - in 1975, 500.000 compared to 350.000 in 1982 - with two opposite movements: the number of collective units fell sharply on one hand, and on the other hand, the number of individual ones increased until 1980, before starting to fall off.

I.2. The Actors

After this brief survey, let us see the institutional framework in which it is produced.

Despite rapid urbanization and high rates of population and economic development this century, the structure of local government administration in France has remained the same since more than one hundred years.

At the lowest level, the administrative unit is the commune (36.400), at the intermediate level, there are 96 Departements, at the upper level, 22 regions. Two main factors have to be taken into account:

- the centralization of the power and of the administration.
- the extreme extent of the mosaic of communes. These factors are historical, and have no equivalent in any other European countries.

o The State's Role

Planning is a function of the State - with the exception of the 25 planning agencies set up in the big towns, and 9 associated with new towns - and is administered at the level of the Departement. Among these agencies, the most important for the administration are the 96 "Directions Departementales de L'Equipement" (D.D.E.) located in each departement. Their role is to produce local plans for the communes of their departement which are not serviced by their own Planning Agency. The D.D.E. has a very important coordinating and supervisory role in plan production. It is a decentralized field service of the Ministry of Town planning and its role reflects the functions of the Ministry: plan-making, development control, transport planning, public housing construction...

After the 2nd World War, the State has been the main driving force for the big development programs of the Reconstruction. The necessary legal and financial tools were created by the State and this allowed them to set up a wide network of infrastructure amenities and equipment in the metropolitan areas.

During the sixties, the State undertook directly other operations in clearly defined geographical places: for example, the new towns, or the major development planning along the coast. Relying on instruments specifically created for the purpose (mainly public development bodies) the State was the leader in the development of these urban poles, frequently against the local authorities concerned, or without them.

It is in the same period that the State started to withdraw from the initiative and financing of other big development operations, leaving their responsibilities to the communes. This was especially true in the seventies, when urban renewal was progressively transferred to the responsibility of the local authority alone.

o The Local Authorities

These communes, whose financial and technical responsibilities have thus increased, are extremely numerous in most of the built up areas. In the context of such a mosaic, the need for communal groupings was most evident in dealing with urban problems and consequently, in the administration of planning. Indeed, there was creation of joint bodies for operating urban public services, but such a cooperation was usually effective around sectorial policies.

What is their role, prior to the reform? They are responsible for making available a large number of local services, building and managing many of them, and they play a very important role in their financing.

Their ability to follow autonomous policies is questionable since they are bound by a tight network of national laws, regulations, instructions and controls. Their budget has to be approved by the Central State Representative, the Prefect (1); the basis of local taxation is fixed by the State.

Many of their investments are dependent on central subsidies which are allocated according to national planning regulations and loans from the specialized public financial institutions are also controlled.

National regulations which define the status of local civil servants often prevent the local authority from developing their own technical expertise, so maintaining a dependence on central state services and their local branches.

I.3. The Tools Available

The Planning and Land Act of 1967 provides for 2 levels of planning: firstly, a master plan which indicates the strategic land use zonings and road proposals; secondly, a local plan (land use plan) which gives detailed guidelines for development applications at the local level, consistent with the broad intentions of the master plan. The Land Planning Act attempted to bring together for the first time politicians and planners to the spatial problems of rapid urbanization.

Despite that fact, the failure is obvious: their elaboration means very long term efforts, they display no flexibility of content, there are sets of rigid regulations about development; furthermore, the classification of land, through the land use plan, implies no counterpart (financial or fiscal) for the private owner. The public participation is not required; in the case of the land use plan, there is a public inquiry, but it is simply a procedure.

Let us say that, during the same period, the land intervention tools available to local authorities have improved substantially: they have witnessed, above all, the development of the preemption rights of public authorities. (2)

As you can see, it is not at all clear whether local authorities can have any policy of their own, or whether they are simply a local tool within the central power machine.

II. The Set of Reforms

France has a reputation for being highly centralized. But over the last 10 years, all political parties have declared themselves in favor of decentralization and of developing local responsibilities.

As soon as elected in 1981, the new government introduced an important reform process which in many of its aspects concerns urban development and planning.

II.1. The 1st Act (March 1982)

This act, concerning the "Rights and liberties of Municipalities, departements and regions" gives new provisions for centre/periphery relations, puts an end to the state control over all local authorities, introducing several changes which at least appear to constitute serious breaks with the past:

- control over the acts of local authorities is abolished, with a-posteriori checks through the Courts replacing the a-priori administrative and political censorship.

- directly elected regional assemblies are to become fully political bodies with significantly extended powers, and executive power resides with the chairman of the regional council convokes the assembly and determine its agenda), and at the level of the Departement, the executive power lies in the hands of the chairman of the Departement Council who becomes the head of all the Administrative services transferred from the state level.

- The Prefects cease to be the executives of the Departement and the Region, becoming mere commissionners of the Republic, responsible for the coordination of the state's field services;

- Local authorities can now take measures to ensure the protection of the economic and social interests of the regional population.

II.2. The Second Act (January 1983)

This act introduces a new repartition of competences between local authorities and the state. Essentially, the state clarifies its role in urban affairs, and in the distribution of planning responsibilities among the 3 levels of administration.

Three main principles lie in this transfer of competences:

- o it must not allow any authority to exercise any control over another one;
- o it only depends on existing local administrative structures;
- o if it implies new charges for the local authority, there is a corresponding transfer of resources.

The act focuses on urban planning and land use permits: in both cases, it is the commune that will inherit the responsibilities that are transferred. The mayors will be the decision-makers where city planning is concerned. (3)

The Departement assumes responsibility for rural development tasks and infrastructures.

The Region assists in the economic development, with a new impulse in regional planning.

The State retains responsibility for housing aids and the safeguard of patrimony and sites.

Let us come back a little while to the urban development. There is a balance between the local powers and the State prerogatives. Communes see their control over land recognized, that is to say most of the competences in urban development. They are responsible for elaborating and applying their local plans. (this puts an end to the principle of joint elaboration). The publication of the plan gives the mayor the responsibility for issuing planning and building permits in the commune. (If there is no plan, these permits will continue to be issued by the State and in its name).

Thus, the withdrawal of the central authorities is far from complete: they still have a wide range of graded intervention procedures that may enable them to impose their will. The land use plan, for example, must always conform to certain national planning regulations and directives. Furthermore, the Act introduces the concept of "intercommunal agreement between a group of local authorities and communes," intercommunal financial plans for medium and long term developments on transportation, housing, and public facilities. These will be produced by voluntary groupings of communes. If the communes fail to carry out these charts, the State will intervene and produce their own estimates.

At last, the Act provides for the financial arrangements necessary to ensure transfers of competences. An important financial reform, coming in 1985, will involve the transfer of state fiscal resources to the localities: thus the economy and budgetary power of the communes should be increased. (4)

II.3. The Economic and Social Plan

The coordination of the activities of the four territorial units of government (Central State, Region, Departement and Commune) will take place within the framework of the national plan.

Because urban policy is becoming more complex, involving the responsibilities of managing spatial growth and preventing urban decay, the need for coordinating is increasing. Through the economic and social plan, France is a good example of how planning assists coordination.

There are 2 aspects:

- 1) the pooling of information between representatives of central, regional, local governments, of the private sector and of the major trade-union organizations;
- 2) the attempt to produce coherent proposals for the medium term (5 years)

However, 2 weaknesses can be noticed:

- 1) the objectives in the plan are in the form of guidelines, rather than mandatory requirements.
- 2) the representatives of regional or local authorities are very few to participate in the preparation of the plan.

II.4. A Bill to Come - Operational Urban Procedure

I told you before, concerning the urban development, decentralization is, so far, only applicable to spatial planning and planning permits. A bill, on the operational urban procedures is on the way at the moment.

Its main stakes will be to set up adequate means for intervention on buildings, to simplify and consolidate preemption rights, to modify the

rules governing the property valuation basis, and to improve citizens' participation in local life: the idea of public discussion is becoming common now.

To prepare this bill, and because it is important that the planning tools at the disposal of decision makers should be well-suited to meet this objective, there was, one year ago, a large scale consultation carried out among those concerned with planning and development. Several points of agreements emerged: the scale on which city-planning problems should be treated, i.e. the neighborhood, the injustices resulting from land tenure inequalities, the need to adopt a more flexible attitude to the control of urban operations, the efforts to overcome functional and social segregation.

III. Conclusion

Fundamentally, the government wishes to transform local political life. If it is really fully implemented, the government's proposals will constitute the most radical local government changes in a century.

However, the administrative decentralization measures tend to be less radical than they appear at 1st view. One may wonder whether such a change will not be vulnerable in the event of a political and social crisis.

Political pressures have contributed to slow down the elections to the departemental assemblies, then the local elections underlined the fall to electoral support for the left: thus, some began to have doubts about administrative decentralization, that might strengthen the powers of the right wing.

In the most urbanized and industrialized regions or departements, the leaders of national stature could take advantage of the new rules of the game. The strengthening at local level could meet with resistance from the administration. This one is very powerful at the local level. Only a few big cities, departements or regions have sufficiently well staffed service, to counterbalance the State administration.

In any case, the 1st reforms adopted, despite appearances, reveal some options that are already clear:

- 1) The Departmeents have been favored, at the expense of the region, the reform of which is delayed until later.
- 2) Big cities with well staffed competent services have been favored - they are the only ones to be able to benefit from the increased autonomy.
- 3) The local representatives have been favored against the Prefects.

Let us say that other reforms are underway, which should achieve the whole process of decentralization:

- reform of the local semi-private companies, to make these instruments more efficient at the service of local authorities;
- reform of the organization of territorial civil service;
- reform of local finance;

It is obviously too soon to appreciate the results of these reforms, but it is certain that the quality of urban development in the years to come, will depend on their success or their failure.

FOOTNOTES

- (1) The most important of the State officials is the Prefect of the Departement - civil servant appointed by the Ministry of the Interior to administer all the state services located in the Departement, and in addition to exercise tutelage over the mayors of the Communes on his Departement. On this point, he checks on the legality of decisions by mayors and municipal councils. On local plans, he had administrative interventions.
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